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THE Township School Area IN Ontario

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Township School Areas in Ontario

The information given below is in question and answer form in order that the questions asked most frequently may be answered clearly and briefly.

Definition.

1.—(Q) What is a Township School Area?

(A) A Township School Area for the administration of schools is a unit which may contain two or more or all of the sections in a township. One Board of five members elected by a general vote will have the administration of the Area for school purposes. In the formation of an Area the natural boundaries of the church, school, and business community should be given consideration.

Size.

2.—(Q) What is a desirable size for a Township School Area?

(A) Experience has shown that eight school sections make a very desirable unit, but there may be geographical and other conditions which make it feasible to have fewer or more than eight sections in an Area.

Progress of Movement.

3.—(Q) How many Township School Areas are there in the Province of Ontario at the present time? How many school sections have been dissolved in organizing these Areas?

(A) There are now 165 Township School Areas in the Province. The organization of these Areas resulted in the dissolution of 863 school sections.

Number of School Sections.

4.—(Q) How many school sections were there in the Province before Township School Areas were first organized?

(A) There were approximately 6,300 school sections. It will be seen, therefore, that 13.6% of the school sections of the Province have been reorganized into Township School Areas.

Organization.

5.—(Q) How is a Township School Area organized?

(A) Under Section 15 of The Public Schools Act the council of any township may, with the approval of the Minister of Education and the consent of a majority of the whole number of members of the council, pass a by-law before the first day of July in any year, setting apart the whole or any portion of the township as a Township School Area, and

may declare that thereafter the school sections included in the Township School Area shall cease to exist as individual school sections and the school boards having jurisdiction therein shall be dissolved. The by-law takes effect on the 25th day of December in the year in which it is passed.

Benefits. **6.**—(Q) What are the chief benefits to be derived from the placing of rural schools under the administration of a Township School Area Board of Trustees?

(A) (a) A more equal school privilege for each rural pupil and a more equitable distribution of school costs.

(b) The raising of the efficiency of schools in the Area.

(c) Opportunities for the better placement of teachers, for friendly competition among rural teachers of the same area, for closer association of rural teachers in study groups, for greater contentment and happiness among rural teachers, and, where necessary, for the dismissal of teachers who fail through lack of a natural aptitude for teaching.

(d) The greater ease with which itinerant special teachers of Music, Manual Training, Household Science, and Agriculture may be engaged.

(e) Increased opportunity for engaging school nurses and of promoting an adequate health programme for rural pupils.

(f) Saving in expenditures for text-books, library books, school supplies, etc., by purchasing in larger quantities at wholesale prices.

(g) (I) More regular meetings by the Boards of Trustees resulting in (i) more efficient administration; (ii) greater consideration of the needs of the schools; (iii) increased local interest.

(II) Better secretarial service for the board and the schools in the Area by the appointment of one competent secretary.

(h) Joint and frequent conferences of teachers and trustees.

(i) Frequent meetings of the local inspector of schools and Boards of Trustees of the Township School Areas in his inspectorate for the discussion of problems and needs of the schools within the Area.

(j) Less local jealousy and prejudice in school matters.

(k) Greater opportunities for co-operation are possible

(l) More likelihood of improvement and beautification of school grounds and school buildings.

(m) An opportunity for offering in the Area, in a centrally located school, better and more practical courses in Grades IX and X (Fifth Classes) for girls and boys of the Area who have completed High School Entrance standing.

(n) The greater opportunity for providing practical courses for the young people of the whole area through night classes.

(o) The greater ease by which the transportation of senior pupils to secondary schools, or to Grade IX and X classes at suitable centres, may be arranged.

(p) The possibility of closing a school of low enrolment until such time as the reopening of the school may be warranted.

Comparison of Cost.

7.—(Q) How does the annual cost of maintaining the schools in a Township School Area compare with the aggregate annual cost of maintaining the same schools in the school sections before the organization of the Township School Area?

(A) In nearly all cases the cost has been less under Township School Area organization. Where the cost has increased it has been due to educational facilities being offered which had not been provided under school section administration.

Legislative Grants.

8.—(Q) Is there any difference in the legislative grants under Township School Area organization?

(A) In order that the assets and liabilities of school sections as at the time of entering Township School Area organization may be adjusted as readily as possible, the Department of Education pays an additional grant of $100.00 to the Board of Trustees for each school section entering the Area in the year of organization. This grant is also continued each year after the Area is formed.

Audit.

9.—(Q) What provision is made for the annual audit of the books of a Township School Area?

(A) While annual meetings of ratepayers may be held in a Township School Area, it is not necessary that they be held. For the purposes of the audit of accounts, books and vouchers and the publication of the annual report of

the auditors, as provided in clause (r) of Section 89 of The Public Schools Act, the Board of a Township School Area is deemed to be an urban board. Consequently, the books are audited by the municipal auditors and a statement is published as soon as the audit is made.

Assets and Liabilities.

10.—(Q) What happens to the ownership of school buildings and school grounds, and what distribution is made of the other assets and liabilities of the school sections when a Township School Area comes into being?

(A) All assets and liabilities and all school properties are vested in the Township School Area Board of Trustees.

Adjustment of Assets and Liabilities.

11.—(Q) Is there any arrangement for the equitable adjustment of the assets and liabilities of school sections when a Township School Area is formed?

(A) All rights and claims between the respective parts of a Township comprising the several school sections united under a Township School Area are valued, adjusted, and determined in an equitable manner by a referee appointed by the Minister of Education. The referee is usually the school inspector of the area. In making his report the inspector consults school secretaries and boards of trustees and arrives at a fair solution of the whole problem. In most cases the inspector recommends an equal rate of taxation for the new Township School Area, but in a few cases it is necessary to impose a higher rate on one or two school sections, over a short period of years because such school sections come into the Township School Area with less in assets or greater obligations than others.

Trustees and Elections.

12.—(Q) How many trustees are there on a Township School Area Board, and how are they elected?

(A) A Township School Area Board of Trustees consists of five members. The election of these trustees is by ballot. The nomination and the election take place at the same time and place as the annual municipal elections of the township. The clerk of the township is also the returning officer for the elections. At the first election the three trustees receiving the highest, second highest, and third highest number of votes are elected for a two-year period, and the two remaining trustees for a one-year period. At the end of the first year there will be two vacancies to be filled, and at the end of the second year there will be three vacancies to be filled, and alternately, each year thereafter two and three trustees are elected to fill vacancies.

Meetings of Board.

13.—(Q) How often does a Township School Area Board of Trustees meet?

(A) The Act does not specify the number of meetings that the new Township School Area Board shall hold in any one year, but the general practice is to hold from six to eight meetings, the Board meeting usually at the Township Hall or at a centrally located school or point in the township. The time and place, however, of the first or organization meeting of the new Board is specified under The Public Schools Act.

Mileage Allowance for Trustees.

14.—(Q) Are the trustees of a Township School Area Board paid in any manner for their services?

(A) The Board of Trustees for a Township School Area may pay to each trustee a mileage allowance not exceeding 7 cents for each mile travelled by him in going to the meetings of the Board from his home and in returning to his home, provided that no allowance shall be paid in respect of more than eight meetings in any one year. No power is given to the Board to make any payment to members for services.

Local Control.

15.—(Q) Do the people lose any control over their schools under Township School Area organization?

(A) The reports reaching the Department of Education from Township School Areas indicate that a greater interest is taken in the administration of the rural schools, and that the Board of five trustees assumes a greater measure of control and gives closer attention to the needs of the schools than was the case under the former school section boards.

Union Sections.

16.—(Q) What happens to union school sections when a Township School Area is formed?

(A) A union school section may be made a part of a Township School Area in the same manner as a school section lying entirely within the township. The only additional requirement is that the council of the outside township is required to pass a resolution granting consent to the by-law before the by-law takes effect.

Area not Consolidation.

17.—(Q) Does the organization of a Township School Area result in the organization of a consolidated school or schools?

(A) The answer is "No." The consolidation of schools is entirely separate from the organization of Township School Areas, and any consolidation will depend entirely upon the wishes of the people concerned.

Location of Areas.

18.—(Q) In what counties and districts of Ontario have Township School Areas been formed?

(A) COUNTIES:

Addington	Grey	Northumberland	Russell
Brant	Halton	Oxford	Simcoe
Dufferin	Hastings	Peterborough	Victoria
Dundas	Huron	Perth	Welland
Durham	Lambton	Prescott	Wellington
Frontenac	Lanark	Prince Edward	Wentworth
Glengarry	Lennox	Renfrew	York
Grenville			

DISTRICTS:

Algoma	Manitoulin	Parry Sound	Temiskaming
Cochrane	Muskoka	Rainy River	Thunder Bay
Haliburton	Nipissing	Sudbury	

The Larger Unit Outside Ontario.

19.—(Q) What progress has been made (i) in other provinces of Canada; (ii) in the United States; and (iii) in other countries toward larger units of administration for rural schools?

(A) In Alberta the public school inspectorate is rapidly becoming the unit for administration. In British Columbia there is a board of trustees for each municipality in most cases. In Nova Scotia the county as a unit is being tried. In Manitoba there are more than 100 consolidated schools. In Quebec the township is largely the unit of administration. In the United States 22 of the 48 States have township or county boards. In the State of Delaware the schools are under the administration of the State authority, the same as in New Zealand and Australia. In New Zealand and Australia the rural schools are under State administration. In England, for a population of about 40,000,000 people, there are only 315 local authorities for all elementary and secondary schools. Scotland, with a population of about 5,000,000, has only 35 school authorities, or school boards, for all elementary and secondary schools. In Northern Ireland there are only 8 local authorities for all elementary and secondary schools, the population being about 1,250,000. In Ontario there are still more than 6,500 school boards in charge of the administration of elementary and secondary schools, while the population of Ontario is less than 3,500,000.

Dissolution of Areas.

20.—(Q) Have any Township School Areas in Ontario been dissolved and re-formed into school sections?

(A) In not a single instance has there been a definite movement towards a return to school section administration. If in the future, however, there is a strong desire in any Township School Area for a return to school section administration, the people may obtain this result by taking the steps in the reverse order as for the organization of the Area.

Assistance in Organization.

21.—(Q) From whom may further help and more detailed information regarding Township School Areas be obtained?

(A) The local school inspectors have been asked by the Department of Education to encourage the organization of Township School Areas, and each local school inspector is ready at any time to give further information and to assist, as far as possible, ratepayers, trustees, and councillors. The officials of the Department of Education are also ready, as far as their time will permit, to attend meetings for the discussion of the subject.

TORONTO, January 18th, 1943.